



Montana

Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTANA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE INCREASES SLIGHTLY

(HELENA) --- Montana's unemployment rate rose again in July, reaching 2.7 percent.

This shift of 0.3 percent was considered a significant movement in the series.

"The recent rise in the unemployment rate may be a sign that the economy is transitioning from a very tight labor market to a more sustainable level of unemployment," said Chief Economist Brad Eldredge.

Montana still holds one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, well below the national rate of 4.6 percent. Neighboring states also continued to rank below the national average with North Dakota at 3.1 percent, South Dakota (3.0), Wyoming (3.7) and Idaho (2.3).

"Low levels of unemployment in Montana present an opportunity for both businesses and workers," emphasized Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly. "If businesses want to remain competitive, they must focus on attracting and maintaining quality workers by offering increased wages and the prospect of career advancement."

The consumer price index (CPI) increased 0.1 percent between June and July. The energy component of the CPI declined for a second straight month and helped to lessen the effect of increases in food and medical expenses.

Montana's employment declined by 800 jobs between June and July to 448,500. The decline in jobs was spread among several industries, with local education experiencing the largest downward movement. The shift in July was tempered by a revision of the June 2007 employment estimates. The new June numbers showed an increase of almost 3,000 jobs to 449,300 from a preliminary total of 446,100. Total U.S. non-farm employment grew by 92,000 between June and July.

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**Unemployment figures are seasonally-adjusted. Seasonally-adjusted numbers remove the effects of events that follow a more or less regular month-to-month pattern each year. These adjustments make nonseasonal patterns easier to identify. The margin of error for the unemployment rate is plus or minus 0.8 percentage points at the 90 percent confidence level. All questions relating to the calculation of unemployment rates should be directed to Tyler Turner, Economist with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau.*

The August 2007 Labor Situation Report will be released Tuesday September 25th, 2007

******* INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET *******

Monthly labor force information for Montana counties are available at:
<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=205>

Monthly Montana industry employment information is available at:
<http://www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/cgi/dataanalysis/?PAGEID=94&SUBID=199>

Annual labor force data for Indian Reservations in Montana are available at:
www.ourfactsyourfuture.org/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=121